



PLANNING AHEAD 2010 HURRICANE SEASON QUICKLISTS

BEFORE AND AFTER A STORM: Prepare Your Pool and Pool Area

These tips were abridged from The Miami Herald's "Hurricane Preparation 2009" insert.

Before a Storm Approaches:

- ☐ If flooding may occur in your area, lower the water in your pool to about 3 inches below the skimmer. Close the skimmer valve to avoid damage to the pool pump and piping. Do not drain your pool! The water will protect the interior finish of the pool from flying debris.
- ☐ Add extra chlorine, in liquid or powdered shock form, to prevent contamination.. An added benefit of this step is that you can use pool water for washing or flushing toilets should your main home water service be disrupted.
- ☐ Stay out of the pool after extra chlorine is added. The safe level of chlorination for swimming is 1.0 to 3.0 parts per million.
- ☐ Turn off electricity to the pool and equipment at the circuit breaker, not at the pump.
- ☐ Disconnect pool lights and automatic chlorinators.
- ☐ Wrap the pool pump in a protective plastic bag once it is cool.
- ☐ If your filter is exposed, wrap it securely with a waterproof covering.
- ☐ Remove the child safety fence if you have one, and do not let children near the pool once the fence has been removed. Reinstall the fence immediately after the storm has passed.
- ☐ Bring patio furniture indoors. Do not submerge it in the pool as the furniture may chip and damage the pool finish.
- ☐ Remove patio awnings and store indoors.

After a Storm Passes:

- ☐ Do not drain your pool after the storm even if it is full of debris. The high water table in South Florida could cause an empty pool to pop up out of the ground.

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- ❑ Pools can become mosquito breeding grounds after a hurricane without electricity to power pumps and pool vacuums. Remove all debris while you are without power or while you wait for pool repairs to maintain reasonable water quality.
- ❑ A Leafmaster device attached to a pool brush handle may help remove dirt from the pool bottom. A garden hose is used to blast material off the bottom into a collection bag.
- ❑ If you did not chlorinate the pool before the storm, add it afterwards. Use a 10 percent sodium hypochlorite solution (sold in the familiar yellow jugs) or the 65 percent calcium hypochlorite granules (powdered shock).
- ❑ Superchlorinate the pool according to manufacturer's instructions. This will restore the regular color but the water will appear cloudy. Keep the pool in a superchlorinated state until power is restored or assistance arrives. Do not allow anyone in the pool during this time since the chlorine level will likely exceed the safe level for swimming of 1.0 to 3.0 parts per million.
- ❑ If the interior coating of your pool is damaged or you notice structural damage, you need expert help. Choose a contractor carefully.

Special Notes about Screened Pool Enclosures:

- ❑ Make sure the metal support cage of the enclosure is firmly anchored into concrete footings, not just soil.
- ❑ Check that restraining cables are tight and in good condition.
- ❑ Check bottom fasteners or bolts for rust or other defects and replace if needed.
- ❑ Remove anything near your enclosure that could puncture the screens.
- ❑ The most vulnerable part of older pool enclosures is the diagonal roof braces, especially in larger cages. Check state and local building codes and product guidelines before buying a new product. In Miami-Dade County, screens must withstand a wind velocity of 146 mph.
- ❑ Consider installing removable screen sections in your enclosure that can be removed to relieve pressure within the enclosure during high wind events.
- ❑ Check your insurance policy. Most insurance carriers no longer provide hurricane coverage for attached or detached screened enclosures in basic homeowner's policies. Some companies will write a separate policy for the structures.

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Special Notes about Attached Screened-In Patios/Lanais:

- ❑ Check that posts anchoring the walls and roof of these attached structures are firmly attached to concrete footings and not just soil. (This may require a professional opinion.)
- ❑ Consider installing protective screening that is expensive but may be worth the cost. Transparent fabric screens cost about \$18 a square foot and are made from a tension fabric similar to that used in trampolines. Debris bounces off the screens that are rolled up for storage. Another option is a heavy-gauge stainless steel mesh screen within an aluminum frame custom fit to your openings.
- ❑ Make sure anything you buy meets state and local codes.